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Maryann Davis

University of Massachusetts Medical School

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**Trajectories of Offending from Childhood to Early Adulthood in Girls With and Without Mental Health System Involvement**

Maryann Davis, PhD, Steven Banks, PhD, Bernice Gershenson, MPH, William Fisher, PhD, Albert Grudzinskas, Jr, JD; Center for Mental Health Services Research

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### Abstract

Using two Massachusetts statewide administrative databases, we examined developmental trajectories of a birth cohort (from ages 8 to 24) in the female (N=34,436) and DMH female (N=738) subpopulations. Joining multiple arrest records, gender differences were observed in the proportion and distribution of arrest patterns. DMH females were twice as likely to be arrested by age 25 compared to their non-DMH counterparts (46% vs. 22%). DMH females were more likely to be arrested within earlier ages of childhood. Developmental trajectory modeling was used to group individuals' patterns of offending behavior. Trajectories varied on level of offending, and peak age of arrest. Trajectories of DMH and non-DMH females were distinct. The most common charge patterns over time were of low frequency, with the greatest probable number of charges occurring at ages 18, 20, and 24. The least common charge patterns were the most alarming. The impact of DMHness is primarily expressed in the proportionality of their charge frequencies over time. Combining DMH and non-DMH females' court records resulted in the best model having a total of eight unique patterns of charge frequencies over time.

![Diagram](image)

**Female Trajectory Groups - Predicted Charges/Year**

**Results**

- **Combining DMH and Non-DMH Females:** Court records resulted in the best model having a total of eight unique patterns of charge frequencies over time.
- **DMH Females:** Twice as likely to be arrested by age 25 compared to their non-DMH counterparts (46% vs. 22%). DMH females were more likely to be arrested within earlier ages of childhood.

![Graphs and charts](image)

**Conclusions**

- **Summary of Trajectory Findings**
  - There are no trajectory groups that are unique to either group.
  - The impact of DMHness is primarily expressed in the proportionality of their charge frequencies over time.
  - Departing groups (early arrest) are among the police load concerning 5-7 charges per year at the peak.
  - Different trajectories have different prevention timing implications.

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For additional information contact:
Maryann Davis, PhD
Phone: 508-831-8166
E-mail: maryann.davis@umassmed.edu